

**Member Development Group
June 2013**

Member Support 2013

Performance Measure: Introducing a Service Level Agreement for Member and Cabinet Support By May 2013

1.	Member Resource Area (Powys County Hall)	
1.a.	Staff	Cabinet Member Support Officer (full time Tues, Wed, Thurs) Secretary (full time Mon and Fri) Members Secretary (part time five days a week) Member Support Manager (full time officer)
1.b.	Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. One Point of Contact – one point of contact for Councillors to access the Council via. phone, e-mail or in person b. Personal Safety Register – officers are able to review the PSR upon request and provide confidential personal information c. Monitoring – where there are contacts ensuring that members are responded to by keeping accurate records and monitoring timely feedback/response from service links d. Research/Investigation – unit officers to undertake investigation and research on any issues (constituency or council) and support delivering on actions to follow up on e. Administrative Support – photocopying, letter writing, report writing, typing, newsletters, business cards, issue of weekly post, access to stationery, booking of hotel rooms/conference bookings and printing cartridges f. Website Maintenance – maintain and update dedicated member site, link with officers to publish good information g. Issuing of Bi-monthly Bulletin – linking with senior officers to get good information for the weekly bulletin to publish on the web to keep members briefed/informed h. Cabinet Offices – three basically equipped offices for sharing with nine Cabinet members i. Opposition Office – dedicated opposition room for use j. Radnor Room – bookable access to the Radnor room for meetings k. Space for Use – general office space for use l. Expenses – link members with relevant officers for expense claim matters m. Other Duties – other duties in discussion with officers and as appropriate.
Obligation on Members		Members can choose whether to access the above or not, the research element and linking with officers to obtain responses to matters has been particularly helpful for members.

2.	Member ICT Training and Development (Resource Area - Powys County Hall)	
2.a.	Staff	Dedicated ICT Training and Development Manager (full time officer) Dedicated ICT Training and Development Officer (full time officer) Dedicated ICT Training and Development Officer (part time)
2.b.	Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Point of Contact - point of contact for IT support needs b. Hardware - issuing of laptops and support c. IT support - including e-mail/laptop support d. Training Support – upon request and when the need arises e. Policy Matters - support in terms of compliance with ICT security/data protection matters f. Software - advice/guidance on use of software
Obligation on Members		Members are strongly advised to contact the unit if they experience IT issues which they are unfamiliar with rather than try to put matters right themselves if they are unsure

3.	Democratic and Scrutiny Services Support	
3.a.	Staff	Democratic Services: Cabinet Manager (full time officer) Democratic Services Officer (full time officer) Scrutiny Services: Scrutiny Manager (full time officer) Scrutiny Services Officer Scrutiny Services Officer
3.b.	Support	Democratic and Scrutiny Services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Code of Conduct – support when considering conduct matters including declaration of interest advice b. Induction – running and supporting member induction c. Scrutiny - support in leading scrutiny reviews and operating scrutiny committees d. Cabinet - supporting the work of Cabinet in discharging its duties e. Shire Meetings – supporting the running of shire meetings f. Work Programmes - supporting the determination of Committee work programmes/business plans and delivering on obligations g. Member Meetings - supporting other high level member meetings where appropriate i.e. delivering on the Change Plan h. Committee Meetings - issuing of papers for Committee meetings i.e. publishing of agenda, papers and minutes in a timely fashion i. Freedom of Information - managing FOI requests for matters which relate to Councillors and their business j. Complaints - supporting the process for the management of complaints made against members/committee decisions k. Attendance – maintaining attendance information l. Training and Development – supporting and driving member training and development programmes
Obligation on Members		If members are unsure or unclear on matters or just want to talk things though they are strongly encouraged to contact officers in relation to the above

4.	Electoral Office Support	
4.a.	Staff	Principal Elections Officer (full time officer) Elections Team (2 time and one full time officer)
4.b.	Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Register of Electors – compile and publish the register of electors and maintain the list of absent voters b. Elections – elections team responsible for ensuring compliance with election requirements and the running of County Council elections/bi-elections c. Electoral Arrangements – responsible for keeping the electoral arrangements of the County under review and responding to Boundary Reviews that affect the County.

5.	Local and Environmental Support	
5.a.	Staff	Local Environment Area Managers x6 Local Environment Operatives – many
5.b.	Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Depot Meetings – requirement for depot managers to hold regular meetings with operatives and members to discuss area work matters and other local issues b. Link Operatives - members to receive contact details for their link officers c. Priority Responding – managers/operatives to prioritise responding to member contacts above other contacts
Obligation on Members		Members are strongly urged to use local contacts rather than approach higher level officers who are often distanced from local matters

June 2013

**CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL
CABINET**

21st May 2013

REPORT AUTHOR:	Councillor Gareth Ratcliffe Cabinet Portfolio Holder – Human Resources/Corporate Governance
SUBJECT:	Cabinet Support
REPORT FOR:	Decision

1. Summary:

This report responds to Cabinet support issues which have come to light in three areas:

1. There has been a significant increase in the number of e-mail and written contacts to Cabinet members. Contacts are often from other members, Assembly Members, Members of Parliament, residents and outside bodies. On occasion it has proven difficult to manage, track and respond to contacts because there is no central collection/recording point.
2. The Council has recently introduced a new procedure for dealing with complaints providing a more co-ordinated approach to recording, tracking and responding to all complaints which includes complaints made to Cabinet members.
3. Finally this report seeks to put in place improved support for Portfolio Holders when meeting with Assembly Members/Members of Parliament.

2. Proposal:

a) One Point of Contact - Cabinet

To introduce a 'one point of contact' system for Cabinet members and to encourage those who want to contact Cabinet members to use it for all written and e-mail contacts (possibly telephone contacts). All contacts made to the point of contact will be logged by officers from the member support/resource area. Once contacts have been logged they will be acknowledged by member support officers.

Once acknowledged the Cabinet member will be made aware of the issue usually by e-mail (either via receipt of scanned letters or e-mails forwarded on). Member support officers will link with service areas to obtain information about issues and provide that information to Cabinet members within 15 days of receipt of the contact. If there are difficulties in obtaining information from the service the relevant director will be informed. The Cabinet member will use the information they receive from the service to help inform their response. The

Cabinet member will sign-off their response before the 20 day response deadline in line with the corporate charter.

It's proposed that the one point of contact operates one e-mail account and one contact address as below:

e-mail: cabinet@powys.gov.uk

address: name of Cabinet member and portfolio, c/o Member Support/Resource Area, Powys County Hall, Llandrindod Wells, Powys, LD1 5LG

In order to make the arrangement work, it will need to be supported by Cabinet members and officers as follows:

- **Cabinet Members** – Cabinet members will need to forward any direct e-mail/written contacts made to them to the member support/resource area for logging. Cabinet members will need to sign-off final responses between the 15th and 20th day after receipt i.e. the 20 day response deadline will be from the date that the contact was received regardless of who received it. It would be helpful if Cabinet members could support the one point of contact system by informing those who contact them direct that we are now operating the system and provide e-mail and written contact details as above
- **Officers** – officers will be required to log and acknowledge all written and e-mail contacts to Cabinet members. They will inform the Cabinet member of the contact and link with officers to obtain information for the Cabinet member to consider when responding. The deadline for the service to provide information to officers from the member support/resource area will be 15 days after the initial contact.

If information is not received from the service the matter will be escalated to the relevant director by officers from the member support/resource area. Once the Cabinet member has agreed a response it will be issued either by letter or e-mail (as preferred by the Cabinet member).

b) Complaints (Have Your Say)

The system for managing complaints has recently been refreshed. If you receive complaints direct you are asked to forward them to haveyoursay@powys.gov.uk or to bring them to the Member Resource/Support area quickly so that they can be logged, acknowledged, considered, investigated and responded to. It is important that complaint information is captured so please follow this process. If you have any issues to discuss about complaints please contact Shane Thomas, Management Team and Member Support e-mail shanet@powys.gov.uk tel. 01597 826430. It is the procedure at stage 1 of a complaint for the service area to investigate and respond. At stage 2 there will be an investigation into matters which would usually be undertaken by an officer from outside the service being complained about. You will be kept informed of the outcome of complaints made to you. Further publicity and information about the complaints policy will be brought to Cabinet in due course.

Quarterly contact and complaint reports will be provided to Cabinet for consideration.

c) Portfolio Holder Meetings with Assembly Members/Members of Parliament

It is usual practice for Assembly Members to bring their personal aides with them to meetings. Historically, when Portfolio Holders have met with Assembly Members/Members of Parliament, they have not been accompanied. It is proposed that Portfolio Holders receive support at meetings if required i.e. an officer attends with them. The officer will take file notes which will summarise the points made during discussions and note actions to be taken. File notes will be shared with all attendees.

3. Powys Change Plan:

It is important to have good systems in place to support Cabinet.

4. Options Considered/Available

Option 1 – to continue with the current arrangement

Option 2 – to agree to the above One Point of Contact, Complaints (Have Your Say) and Portfolio Holder Meetings with Assembly Members/Members of Parliament proposals

Option 3 – to consider other options

5. Preferred Choice and Reasons

The preferred choice is option 2 above which will enable officers to provide better support to Cabinet. The current failings being:

1. there is no one point to contact Cabinet members and it has proven difficult to track and respond to correspondence
2. the Council has recognised its failings in terms of a capturing complaint information and has recently refreshed its system
3. Cabinet members are not supported always when they meet with Assembly Members/Members of Parliament, the above puts in place that support upon request

6. Sustainability and Environmental Issues/Equalities/Crime and Disorder,/Welsh Language/Other Policies etc

7. Children and Young People's Impact Statement – Safeguarding and Wellbeing

8. Local Member(s)

9. Other Front Line Services

10. Support Services (Legal, Finance, HR, ICT, BPU)

11. Local Service Board/Partnerships/Stakeholders etc

12. Communications

The new arrangements should be communicated to all Cabinet members, Heads of Service, Assembly Members and Members of Parliament to ensure successful implementation of the new arrangements and better support Cabinet.

13. Statutory Officers

14. Members' Interests

Recommendation	Reason for Recommendation
To support the proposal in this report (point 2 a, b, and c) and to monitor the position.	To provide better Cabinet support.

Cabinet Support v1